



CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: January 1 to March 31, 2005

**IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG POLITICAL PARTIES AND CIVIL
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS:
TRAINING YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS (03529)
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

**Project Dates: August 1, 2003 to July 31, 2005
Total Budget: \$150,000.00 Expenses to date: \$59,095.45**

I. SUMMARY

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)'s Political Leadership Program (Leadership Program or LP) seeks to strengthen relationships between political parties and civil society organizations in Latin America. In response to a "crisis of credibility" facing political parties in the region, NDI launched this initiative in 1999 to help a select group of young and emerging political leaders develop the skills necessary to lead more modern and responsive political parties and to address the issue of party renewal. The Leadership Program begins with an intensive, ten-day leadership development seminar and continues in-country with the young leaders as they implement concrete party-strengthening projects.

One of the key themes of the Political Leadership Program is improving working relations and linkages between political parties and civil society. Using the LP in conjunction with its longstanding civil society program, the Civic Network, NDI seeks to help educate parties and civil society groups on the importance of their respective roles as well as practical tools and strategies to help build a foundation for constructive collaboration. The objectives of the proposed program are to increase collaborations between political parties and civil society and to increase civil society engagement in policymaking and oversight of political parties. As a party-strengthening initiative, the Leadership Program provides access to key political leaders and a structured forum to address issues that have caused tension between parties and civil society groups – the lack of mutual outreach and coalition-building around issues of shared concern.

During this quarter, NDI continued to implement Leadership Program activities that focused on increasing and improving political party and civil society relations. These follow-on activities were implemented in Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. An initial draft of the program's training manual on improving political party and civil society relations was completed. NDI also strengthened its LP seminar curriculum focusing on party coalition building and outreach to civil society.

II. BACKGROUND

The right of citizens to participate in public affairs as individuals or through political parties and civil society organizations is a fundamental tenet of a democracy. Political parties help to aggregate diverse interests, develop compromise and consensus on national policies and legislation, and form governments and legislatures. Civil society groups play a corresponding role by providing an avenue for participating in political life, promoting government responsiveness and accountability, and giving voice to underrepresented sectors.

In recent years, however, civil society organizations and political parties in Latin America often have been mutually critical and suspicious. Some parties perceive civil society groups as unelected rivals, competing to represent the views of citizens. Parties may also bridle at civil society critiques designed to promote accountability. At the same time, civil society advocacy efforts are perceived as taking an anti-party or obstructionist approach to influencing policymaking, contributing to eroding public confidence in already weakened parties and hindering efforts to develop a consensus on policies to address national problems.

This tension between parties and civil society groups often prevents them from finding common political ground. Nonetheless, it is critical that these two sectors work together in the national interest, because public friction between them often leaves citizens disillusioned by the perceived failure of the political process.

To respond to this challenge, NDI is working to strengthen relationships between political parties and civil society organizations in Latin America through the Institute's Political Leadership Program, using trainers from NDI's Civic Network program. As a party-strengthening initiative, the Leadership Program provides access to key political leaders and a structured forum to address issues that have caused tension between parties and civil society groups – the lack of mutual outreach and coalition-building around issues of shared concern.

One of the key themes of the Political Leadership Program is improving working relations and linkages between political parties and civil society. Using the LP in conjunction with its longstanding civil society program, the Civic Network, NDI would help educate parties and civil society groups on the importance of their respective roles as well as practical tools and strategies to help build a foundation for constructive collaboration.

The objectives of the program are the following:

- To increase collaborations between political parties and civil society; and
- To increase civil society engagement in policymaking and oversight of political parties.

Political Leadership Program

In response to an ongoing crisis of confidence facing parties in Latin America, in 1999 NDI created the Political Leadership Program. The one-year Leadership Program begins with an intensive, ten-day leadership academy. The 2005 seminar is scheduled to take place in Lima,

Peru from April 8 to April 17, 2005. The program continues in-country, where NDI provides technical assistance to the participants as they implement concrete party reform projects. Each participant is also required to recruit a high-level party mentor to ensure party support for the projects. NDI's follow-on assistance includes training and guidance from political party and civil society practitioners from around the world. To date, Leadership Program activities to promote improved relations and linkages between political parties and civil society have taken place in Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Peru. Non - civil society related Follow On assistance to the LP party strengthening projects has been funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED – Bolivia, Colombia, Peru) and USAID (Dominican Republic, Mexico).

Civic Network

NDI's work in Latin America is not limited to working with political parties. Rather, NDI understands the important role that civil society organizations play in building and maintaining democracy. In 1996, at the urging of a gathering of election monitoring organizations from around the region, NDI established the Civic Network, a mechanism for the exchange of expertise and information between member organizations. The Network has grown to include more than 45 organizations in 14 countries. Civic Network members have come to recognize the role that civil society can play in monitoring and improving the performance of political parties. Many member groups have developed methodologies in this area, including monitoring campaign finance, budget implementation, and primary and party reform processes.

Country Contexts:

Bolivia

On March 7, President Carlos Mesa tendered his resignation against a backdrop of ongoing social and political unrest. His resignation was unanimously rejected by the Congress, demonstrating a strengthened mandate. However, opposition protests and road blockades later intensified. On March 15, the President made a surprise announcement that he would present a bill to Congress to hold early presidential and congressional elections. The proposed congressional elections would elect new members of congress who would simultaneously serve as delegates for the pending constituent assembly. Both chambers of congress rejected the proposal as unconstitutional. Political tensions remain high as the senate debates controversial hydrocarbon legislation. The regions of Santa Cruz and Tarija have also passed legislation that would provide them with more autonomy. Political parties face a full electoral calendar: a national referendum on regional autonomy; the selection of governors; a constituent assembly process in 2005 – 2006; and presidential and congressional elections in 2007.

Dominican Republic

Dominican civil society has engaged in extensive monitoring of the governance initiatives of the new Leonel Fernandez administration. The three largest political parties in the Dominican Republic have recently lost their party founders and are engaging in internal restructuring and reform. Civil society is also monitoring these reform initiatives closely.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NDI chose the Leadership Program as the vehicle for implementing this program due to the access the program provides to policy makers, civil society, and party leaders at both the national and regional level. Participants of the 2003 and 2004 Political Leadership Program include 66 emerging leaders from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The Leadership Program seminar and NDI's follow-on activities in the participating countries provide an opportunity to increase linkages between civil society and political parties.

A. LP Follow On Activities:

Follow-on activities involve expert trainer visits to the five countries participating in the 2003 and 2004 Leadership Programs (Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Peru), during which the experts work with the Leadership Program participants to organize workshops targeting civil society and political party activists. At these workshops, mechanisms of mutual cooperation are introduced to civil society and political party leaders.

During this quarter, Leadership Program follow-on activities focused on improving political party and civil society relations were conducted in Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. Please find below a summary of recent activities:

Bolivia:

As political tensions continued to run high in Bolivia, on January 28, NDI developed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Sociology at the University of Saint Andrews (UMSA), to conduct a joint series of seminars about the constituent assembly. 2003 Leadership Program participant **Douglas Ardiles** of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* - MNR) proposed this project and facilitated the collaboration between NDI and his university. The seminars will address the themes of leadership and the constituent assembly and will include the participation of speakers from various sectors and political parties.

On February 19, Ardiles organized a multiparty event where NDI Field Director Francisco Herrero conducted a session on political leadership training. This event served as the inauguration of the program. Among the 83 participants were professors and UMSA political science students; political party representatives from New Republican Force (*Nueva Fuerza Republicana* – NFR), Nationalist Democratic Action (*Acción Democrática Nacionalista* – ADN), Solidarity Civic Union (*Unión Cívica Solidaridad* – UCS) and Movement Toward Socialism (*Movimiento hacia Socialismo* – MAS); and members of the central labor union and indigenous groups. The event drew press coverage from television channel *Cadena A* and journalists from other national media sources.

Ardiles organized a second multiparty seminar on March 18th at UMSA to discuss the constituent assembly. Participants at the second seminar considered the constituent assembly process, comparing Bolivia's situation with other regional and global constituent assembly experiences. The objective of the event was to create a space for dialogue between political

parties and civil society groups in order to reduce current levels of polarization and facilitate consensus building.

Speakers included Oscar Davsie, coordinator of the legislative branch's Special Commission on Convening the Constituent Assembly (*Comisión Especial de Convocatoria a la Asamblea Constituyente*, CECAC); Sergio Villarroel, a representative from the Constituent Assembly Coordination Unit of the executive branch (*Unidad de Coordinación de la Asamblea Constituyente*, UCAC); UMSA sociology professor Omar Guzmán; and Carlos Cordero, representative of UMSA's political science department. The seminar also included a panel of political party leaders who presented their party's constituent assembly proposals. Among the 101 participants were representatives from political parties ADN, MAS, MNR, Movement Without Fear (*Movimiento Sin Miedo* – MSM), NFR, National Unity (*Unidad Nacional* – UN) and Indigenous Movement Pachakuti (*Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti* - MIP); citizen group M17 from El Alto; and civil society groups Cooperative Federation of Bolivian Miners (*Federación de Cooperativas Mineras de Bolivia*, FECOMIN), M 22 (a group of neighborhood committees representing the west of La Paz), the sport league Adelpaz, the Afro Bolivian Movement, and the recently formed opposition Unity Pact (the *Pacto de Unidad*, comprised of various organizations representing indigenous populations).

Dominican Republic:

From February 3 to February 15, NDI traveled to the Dominican Republic to conduct Leadership Program follow-on activities. As described below, some of these activities focused on improving political party and civil relations. To conduct these activities, NDI recruited 2000 Leadership Program participant and party trainer Melissa Diaz from the Democratic Party in the United States. Diaz recently served as Director of Specialty Media for the Democratic National Committee (DNC) where she was responsible for planning and implementing the DNC's communications and outreach strategy for the Hispanic, Asian, Gay and Lesbian community. She previously served as the Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and as the Deputy Communications Director for the House Democratic Caucus.

Dominican Liberation Party (*Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* - PLD):

Gisela Estévez: currently the district press, propaganda, and women's secretary for the PLD, Estévez is also the president of the community group "La Altagracia." The goal of Estévez's project is to improve the secretariats of the PLD that engage with civil society and other sectors. The objective of her project is to consolidate the structures of these specific secretariats with continuous programs outside of the electoral arena.

On February 5, NDI trainer Melissa Diaz conducted a workshop on media training with 40 PLD women leaders whose main function is to serve as liaisons between the party and civil society. The workshop took place in Cienfuegos, one of the most impoverished communities in the city of Santiago, and focused on improving the message development skills of the participating women leaders in their negotiations with civil society and party leaders. The workshop included training on women's mobilization, media skills building, and message

development and dissemination. Throughout the course of Estévez' project, 100 women who have participated in project activities have joined the PLD; two of them are running for leadership positions within their respective community boards.

On February 6, partner NGO Citizen Participation (*Participación Ciudadana*, PC) collaborated with NDI in organizing a workshop for 30 members from their chapters in Santiago, La Vega, Moca, and Salcedo on message development and media training for civil society organizations. The purpose of the training was to provide civil society leaders with message development tools.

On February 9, Diaz conducted the same workshop with 20 civil society representatives and PC volunteers from Santo Domingo. Both workshops included group exercises such as the "Message Box," which allows participants to analyze their group's internal and external message, and involves them in the creation of a mock press release.

B. 2005 Leadership Program Seminar:

As with previous seminars, the 2005 Leadership Program seminar will include a panel and exercise on coalition building and political party outreach to civil society as part of its curriculum. The panel on case studies of political party and civil society collaborations includes two Leadership Program participants and a representative of partner NGO PC. 2004 Colombia Democratic Independent Pole (*Polo Democrático Independiente* - PDI) Leadership Program participant Angélica Lozano will discuss PDI's initiatives to include civil society in their statutes, and organizational and platform development processes in preparation for PDI's first national congress. Federico Tong, a 2003 We are Peru Leadership Program participant, will discuss tools and best practices for implementing a Leadership Program project targeting outreach to civil society based on his experience in Peru. Ricardo Sosa of Citizen Participation will discuss PC's initiatives to foster greater political transparency by monitoring political party primaries in the Dominican Republic.

NDI has also invited representatives from the Peruvian NGO Transparency (*Transparencia*) and International IDEA to discuss their initiatives to work with political parties, including regional research on campaign finance regulations and gender quota legislation as well as recent collaborations to help develop political party legislation in Peru. NDI is hoping to include these examples as case studies in the manual on tools for improving political party and civil society relations that is being developed as part of this program.

The panel will be followed by an exercise led by NDI political negotiation trainer and Secretary of International and Institutional Relations at the Union for All Party (*Unión por Todos*) in Argentina, Guillermo Yanco. As part of this exercise, the participants will be divided into groups to negotiate coalitions and joint initiatives with different sectors, including civil society, unions, and student, business, women and peasant associations.

Several of the 2005 Leadership Program participants have proposed to implement party strengthening projects that target working with civil society. During the seminar, many

participants change their projects to target this sector. Please find below brief summaries of initial project descriptions.

Colombia:

Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Colombiano*):

Boris Zapata, Deputy Secretary General of the Liberal Party, proposes to design and implement a political strategic plan to better engage party members and to improve contact with new sectors including civil society.

Dominican Republic:

Dominican Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano – PRD*)

Sigmund Freund, a Member of the Executive Committee of the Dominican Revolutionary Youth (JRD) and the Secretariat of International Relations of the PRD, proposes to form a working group of 50 youth to examine internal democracy issues within the party. Activities will include working sessions with religious, business and union organizations to discuss better inclusion of those sectors into the structures of the PRD as well as training on the theme of political negotiation.

Mexico:

National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional - PAN*):

Emmanuel Torres, Civil Society Secretary of the Party Municipal Committee of Guadalajara, proposes to train civil society leaders in leadership skills in order to increase citizen political participation and the formation of associations. Training topics will include social leadership, working in groups, decision making, communications, time management, and fundraising.

C. Manual Development:

NDI is developing a manual on practical tools for improving political party and civil society relations that will be distributed through the Leadership Program and the regional Political Party Network (PPN). The manual will also be made available online on the PPN website. To make the proposed manual useful for other regions of the world, it will be developed in both English and Spanish.

During this quarter, NDI is editing the English version of the manual, in preparation for the manual's publication next quarter. NDI has collected feedback from political party and civil society practitioners and is incorporating their suggested changes. The manual focuses on practical ways political parties and civil society can work together toward common goals and includes participatory exercises that facilitate understanding of the other point of view, and techniques for constructive problem solving and collaboration. The manual also includes

specific examples and case studies of existing collaborations between parties and civil society in the region. NDI is conducting additional research regarding specific case studies.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: To increase collaborations between political parties and civil society.

- LP 2003 Douglas Ardiles' conference series on the constituent assembly process has provided political parties and civil society leaders an opportunity to jointly analyze party platforms and the government agenda with regard to the assembly process.
- As part of the LP, NDI conducted training workshops with partner NGO Citizen Participation in the Dominican Republic that strengthened the communication and message development skills of PC chapters in Santiago, La Vega, Moca, Salcedo and Santo Domingo.
- Through LP follow-on activities in the Dominican Republic, NDI helped strengthen the message development skills of 40 women from the PLD in Santiago whose main function is to serve as a liaison between the party and civil society.
- The 2005 Leadership Program seminar curriculum was further strengthened to include case studies and a coalition building exercise to foster increased collaborations between political parties and civil society.

Objective: To increase civil society engagement in policymaking and oversight of political parties.

- Civil society trainers from Citizen Participation, *Transparencia* and International IDEA have been incorporated into the 2005 Leadership Program seminar to provide tools and best practices regarding joint civil society and political party initiatives pertaining to policy making and oversight of political parties.

V. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

This quarter resulted in important progress in the development of curricula and case studies regarding tools for improving political party and civil society relations. NDI collaborations with civil society partner Citizen Participation in the Dominican Republic further consolidated their programs that target outreach, communication, political parties and participation. With the 2005 Leadership Program, NDI continued to recruit and select participants focusing on improving political party and civil society relations.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

During the next quarter, NDI will continue to conduct technical assistance visits to 2003-2005 Leadership Program countries, targeting the improvement of political party and civil society relations. In particular, NDI is collaborating with Afro-Colombian civil society groups

and political parties to organize joint training activities in Colombia in May, to further develop relations and collaboration between those two sectors. NDI also hopes to publish and distribute the manual along with case studies on mechanisms to help improve political party and civil society relations. Once the manual is complete, NDI hopes to conduct a regional forum with civil society and political party representatives to further test some of the proposed case studies and exercises.